

Advocacy Webinar Report – December 7, 2015

Opportunities for Elevating Afterschool and Summer Programs in the 2016 Election Presented by the National Afterschool Alliance

I. Status of National Political Scene

- Seats in US Senate – Democrats have 10 seats to defend and Republicans have 24 seats to defend. Republicans control the Senate
- Seats in US House all seats are up for re-election – Democrats control the House.
- Education is near the top of issues for voters below terrorism and the economy
- Republicans do not see a big federal role in education and have not talked about education; they have distanced themselves from a federal role in education except for being against the common core.
- Democrats are talking about education but no one is talking about the importance of afterschool and summer programs
- State of the Cities Report – 2014 also has some insights about trends in political dialogue – education is not a priority in any of the cities regardless of size, region, and location in a state.

II. Do's and Don't's for Advocates

Don'ts –

- Don't promote a candidate
- Don't give unequal treatment
- Don't engage in indirect campaigning (such as linking the organization with a specific candidate or party) – Do not follow or “like” a candidate unless they are an elected official

Do's-

- Provide voter education
- Take a position on a public policy issue
- Invite candidates to speak
- Get to know the candidates
- Use social media

- Form partnerships with other advocates

III. Social Media

- Use Twitter – Follow issues on “Tweetdeck.” You can create a list of candidates without showing favoritism. You can learn more about them by seeing what they are posting.
- Inform advocates about how to use social media
- Have a “watch” party during which advocates do the following: (1) wear something to identify their organization, (2) post photos, (3) check-in, (4) encourage supports to share content
- Post statements like this using social media: “We are pleased that candidates are talking (or not talking) about [our issues].”
- Create surveys and share results using interesting graphics (example, a one page chart with each candidates face in the first column and their answers to specific questions – using THEIR words – in 5 or 6 additional columns. List questions at the tops of these columns.
- **Partner with larger groups who take candidate polls.**

IV. Partnerships

- Find partners who are well positioned to advance your cause. (Examples: Rock the Vote, Every Child Matters, Save the Children Action Network – These have 501-C-4 designations)
- If you partner with a larger organization that is taking polls and/or creating surveys, ask them to include a question or questions about afterschool and summer programs. Offer something in return for their assistance (e.g., money or time)
- Partner with groups who are hosting town hall meetings and forums.
- **Record all answers to your questions at these events.**
- State Partners: BGCA, YMCA
- Education Community – PTA, Health & Nutrition Teachers
- Broader Community – Civic and Religions Organizations, business leaders, pediatricians.

V. Data Sources – use it to make your cases

- America After 3 PM
- Afterschool Alliance Issue Briefs
- Communities in Schools
- Kids Count
- Child Care Aware
- CLASP Data Finder
- CLASP in States

Use the Afterschool Alliance's "Election Toolkit" – updated for 2016

Note: Non-profits are especially good at getting out the vote. There is a non-profit webinar set for Dec. 10 at 2:00. Short link is bit.ly/Dec10thWebinar.